



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Second Drowning Confirmed in Sequoia National Park

A search for a 14-year-old Exeter girl that started yesterday evening ended today when her body was recovered from the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River in Sequoia National Park.

On Sunday evening, family members were at the river near the Hospital Rock Picnic Area. Just before 8:00 p.m. they observed the girl, who was swimming, go below the surface of the water in front of large rocks and a rapid. They notified the park at 8:06 p.m. Rangers responded and commenced searching the riverside. The search continued well after darkness fell.

Personnel with large floodlights watched the river all night. At first light this morning, a helicopter with two rangers who are very familiar with the terrain began flying along the river. Ground teams continued searching both sides of the river downstream. The Tulare County Swiftwater/Dive Team and a deputy sheriff joined park staff in searching portions of the river.

Just before noon, the helicopter reported a clue in a pool some 500 river yards downstream from the point last seen. The Dive Team retrieved the victim from that pool at 12:15pm.

During these hot days, many people have been seeking out the river for relief. On Saturday, a girl from Tulare also drowned in this area.

Safety is an issue year-round all along this river. Visitors are urged take note of posted warnings and to refrain from swimming, despite the heat. If you choose to approach the river: Enter the water only if you are a strong swimmer, wear a life jacket, and refrain from drinking alcohol. Never go alone. Drowning is the most common cause of death in these national parks and many public lands.

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